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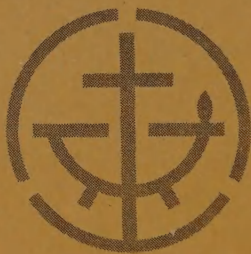
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TO CHILDREN

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DOROTHY GRENSIDE



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LITTLE BUILDERS

NEW THOUGHT TALKS TO CHILDREN

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BY

DOROTHY GRENSIDE

Author of "Thought-Ships"

WITH A FOREWORD BY

RALPH WALDO TRINE

London

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1915

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FOREWORD

THERE is something that we of to-day know that was known to very few of those who have gone before us. There are very many, even of the older ones among us to-day, who do not know it. Children throughout all the world should be very happy to know it, while it may be of the greatest use to them.

It is the wonderful fact that thoughts are forces—that each thought builds of its own kind. As we think, so we become. Like not only builds like, but like also attracts like. By our thoughts we are continually attracting to us conditions and people of the same kinds as the thoughts which we entertain and live mostly with.

It is a very old and a very true saying, that birds of a feather flock together.

FOREWORD

It is because of this law—that like attracts like. There is nothing that comes by chance; and the more we know, the more clearly we realise this.

Life is of our own making, whether we realise it or not. To make it—as we would have it—through an understanding and a wise use of thought, is surely the part of the wise, and, therefore, of the happy.

Thoughts of love and good-will are sensed and are felt by others, and they in turn draw to us love and good-will from others. Thoughts of anger or hatred or ill-will arouse in others, and draw to us from them thoughts and feelings of these same types.

Thoughts of health and wholeness enable the Life-force within to build healthy cell-tissue, which means health and wholeness of body. Thoughts of weakness and likewise of fear make us weak within, and weaken our efforts in all we do. Thoughts of strength and of courage make us strong within,

FOREWORD

and make all our outward efforts more effective and successful.

So within us lies the cause of whatever in time takes form in our lives. We alone are the makers of our own good or ill fortunes.

It was our Master Who taught, that God is within us—He dwells in the realm of our inner minds. To desire always and to believe that He directs and that He protects us in all our ways, makes His leading and His protection doubly sure.

He also taught us that God is Love. The more, then, that we love and show our love for all people—wherever they may live in the world—the more we show that God lives in us. Deeds of kindness are the best means, and in most cases the only means, that we have of showing our love. And God would have us never fail in kindness and care for all of our dumb fellow-creatures ; for they are of His creation just as we are, and abide in His love.

FOREWORD

It is, then, the thoughts that we entertain and live most continually with, which will determine our lives. The life will follow the thought without fail.

Truly, therefore, children throughout all the world should be very happy to learn, and mothers should be very happy to teach them that their lives are to be of their own making—that they are building their lives by the thoughts they entertain.

RALPH WALDO TRINE.

SUNNYBRAE FARM,
CROTON-ON-THE-HUDSON,
NEW YORK.

BEFORE WE BEGIN

So you have come to me for a story.

“A *real one*, please,” you say.

So we will leave the pixies and elves to play by themselves in the wood,—— the mermaids shall swim through the golden seas, and we will not look their way.

For I have something for you which is better than a story.

We will speak to-night of the real things, just you and I together.

How do we build, little workman, our Castle
Beautiful ?

The ways are three.

With tender thoughts, with loving words, with
selfless deeds we build,—

Until a Castle rises that reaches up to God.

I

WHERE GOD IS DWELLING

I WANT you first to understand that I really mean it when I say that God is everywhere and is within you.

He is not tucked away in some great far-off Heaven, so that you wonder if your prayers can climb so high : He is not living only in a church, to which the people go to find him once a week ; He does not merely listen to you when you say your prayers, or suddenly keep watch when you do wrong.

He is in the very air which now you breathe, He is in every stone or flower or tree, He is in all the fishes, birds and beasts, and in every little child you meet upon the road.

“ Is He in the flowers ? ” You ask me.

Yes, I mean exactly what I say.

WHERE GOD

He is in them all, because He made them by His Thought—He is their Life. This whole big world is just a Thought of God's—He made it by His Thinking.

Life is another word for Thought, and both are words for God. It is wonderful that Thought can be so strong; but you too have this great gift growing, and although you cannot yet build living plants or trees, your thoughts will some day grow so beautiful that they will blossom into lovely flowers.

God's Thoughts are always beautiful : He makes no ugly house of bricks, but builds great trees with outstretched sheltering arms, and fills with life each tiny leaf and twig.

You must learn to love the trees, for God is truly living in their forms; I would not have you pass through life and fail to find Him there. Don't cut your name upon the bark, or break

IS DWELLING

the boughs away. God built the tree, so try to see His Life within, and do not spoil a Thought of God's. Always remember that where you can see Life, that Life is God, and therefore Life must be to you a precious thing.

Each flower you pick is a little House that He has made to hold a tiny part of Him, for He does not leave a flower to grow alone—it could not live unless He dwelt inside. So while it is living He is dwelling there : it dies because He goes.

It grieves me if you pick a flower and throw it on the path because you find another you like better, or because you tire of carrying it, for then you take away a little House in which God loves to dwell.

So water the flowers in your garden if the sun has parched them up, and God will stay a little longer in the Houses He has made.

WHERE GOD

If you must pick them, do so then with tender, loving hands : yet I would rather that you left a daisy growing in the grass, just where God's Thought has rested.

Of course I do not mean that you must leave each weed to grow, for weeds will choke and spoil a lovelier House of God. You must check them if they thrive within your garden, yet even weeds may live untouched in wild and lonely spots. . . .

What other Houses can we find ?

You shall think and tell me.

What ! Are you shaking your head ?

Why, who is it that is sitting on the hearth-rug washing her face with her paws, and who is it scratching outside the door, hoping to join you here ?

Pussy and Jack.

What beautiful little Houses we are finding now, so full of life and understanding !

IS DWELLING

See the spider spinning her web,
and the sparrow building her nest!
Go to the pool in the wood and watch
the minnows play! See how Jack
looks for his master and knows the
click of the gate! Can't you see God
peeping through the windows of each
House?

Because you know that He is there
you must not harm the smallest thing
that lives, unless it harms another life
because it has not learnt as yet obedience
to its Inner God. To take life means
that you drive God from His House, and
you cannot bring Him back again how-
ever much you try.

So when you are big, and people
speak to you of "sport"—which is
the name they give to killing animals for
"fun"—you must see the God within
each living thing, and say you will
not hurt His House. This will show
that you have learnt a lesson of much

WHERE GOD

value,—that you know that the life within each bird or beast is the same great Life that looks more clearly through your windows,—those blue-eyed windows of your soul that God is shining through !

You understand that every living thing is just a part of God : to hurt it must hurt you, for you are one with God. To help it brings you happiness—the REAL YOU I am speaking of, the You who lives within the House.

You know now why I say that God is never far away, for He is the Life in you and in all that grows or moves or thinks, the Life in every leaf, or bird or child.

Now you can see why you must keep your House spotless and pure.

If your hands and face are grubby, wash them clean, for God is living in you.

Yet not only must you keep the

IS DWELLING

outside of that House as cleanly as you can, you must brush the cobwebs from the inside too. Those cobwebs come from unkind thoughts and angry words : they soil the House and make it dark and ugly, and God cannot use it as He would.

We grown-up people take care of it for you while you are small, so that some day the Real You may speak through it to others who do not understand. . . .

You must remember that nothing can hurt you which only hurts your House. When you were tired yesterday it was only the House that felt the need of rest, when you fell and bruised your knee it was only the House that felt the pain.

Learn that such hurts do not matter : be brave and take them cheerily. Your House can stand such outer knocks,

WHERE GOD IS DWELLING

and grows much stronger by the help of them.

It is the inside cobwebs that we talked about that you must guard against, those unkind thoughts and angry words. Sweep them away with the brush that is yours ! Keep the House sweet and clean for the God who lives within !

“ The brush ? ” You ask. “ What brush can you mean ? ”

I watch your dear, wide, questioning eyes.

Of course you know that I must mean *Your Will*.

II

YOUR BODY IS A COAT

I WANT you to remember every minute of the day, that this body of yours which seems so real a thing is only useful to you because it tells the Spirit that lives in it all the lessons that it learns. It is the means whereby your Spirit grows.

This Spirit in you must be God, for it is Life, and Life we know is God. This is why Life seems so precious to us : this is why we teach our bodies to be servants that obey, for we know they must not be our masters.

Suppose you wanted to go in the garden, and your feet refused and walked upstairs instead ?

That makes you laugh, I know, but that is just what happens when you

YOUR BODY

are angry and cross. Your body is not doing what you wish, for the Real You inside is a part of God, and God is Love, to whom all quarrelling is wrong.

When you lose your temper you have forgotten that you are Love, and your body then is like your feet that will not walk the way you want.

So the next time you are angry, say to yourself,—

“ It is my body that likes to be cross,
but I am not my body.”

Stop another minute, and say to yourself very slowly and quietly,—

“ I AM LOVE, I AM LOVE.”

And you will find that your angry temper leaves you, and that you want “to kiss and be friends”; because Love that is in you is stronger than your body.

IS A COAT

Love is like a King upon a throne, his country is your body and you must let him rule it wisely and well. When other people are angry you must not be angry too ; just because their bodies are fighting against their King, you must not let yours do the same.

Try to help them. Try to see Love,—the King,—seated on his throne, however much his country is upset ; for if you look for Love it will help him to rule, not only in another heart but in your own as well.

You must look for Love in all you do : it is a law that is sure and true that anything that lacks Love must be wrong.

Yesterday you showed me the body of a thrush upon the garden-path.

“ See, it is dead ! ” you said.

But now that we have talked together you know that it is not really dead, but that it has only laid aside a little

YOUR BODY

coat that it no longer wants, for every house is just a tiny coat.

How would you like it if you always wore the same little thread-bare coat, however tight and small it grew ?

You couldn't wear the same one that you wore three years ago. Think how you have grown since then ! Why, you would laugh if you tried to put it on !

So it is laid aside, and you have a new one which gives you plenty of room to grow.

Now you see why you cannot live within the same little body. It is because you grow too big for it.

Do you understand, I wonder ?

It is because when Love grows bigger in your heart, you want a body that will not stop you when you try to help your brothers : as your eyes open and you see more of what Life means, you want a body that will answer every greater thought . . .

IS A COAT

If this is too difficult, you will understand it later on. . . .

When you outwear a Body-Coat—when you have grown so big that it cramps and checks your Love—a Gentle Hand unfastens it and you step out quite quietly and easily. This is what people call Death.

Isn't it strange that they should be frightened to die ?

How silly to be afraid of anything that is helping them to grow !

But I know that you will never be frightened, because you have learned that the Real You cannot die ; but that a worn-out coat is unbuttoned because it has grown too small. You need not fear to lose it, for you have many coats, each more beautiful than the last, finer and more wonderfully made, and in each you grow a little wiser and more loving.

So when you lay aside a coat it is

YOUR BODY IS A COAT

a sign that you are growing, and we will not be sorry or sad when God takes away the coats of those we love. . . .

The reason God has said "Thou shalt not kill," is so that we may not tear a coat too soon from some one who is wearing it. You would not take a coat from a little child that you met in the street, and leave him to walk home without it in the cold ?

I know you would not.

Then you must not kill the smallest living thing, or you will take its coat away before it is ready for another.

So if you will always remember that your body is just a coat that you wear as long as it is useful to you, you will have learnt one of the very big lessons that Life can teach. . . .

III

EVERY LITTLE THOUGHT A THING

So you have come to me, to listen again
in the firelight to things that are real
and true. . . .

I wonder if you know what happens
when you think ?

I want you to understand that your
thought is part of you, and just as every
thought of God's can build a flower or
tree, so your thought builds itself a
form, a little shape. Every time you
think you are making something quite
as real as if you built it with your hands.

And listen to this ! Here is a wonder-
ful thing ! When you think, you make
that thought at once.

If you build a castle on the sands,

EVERY LITTLE THOUGHT

see how slowly it grows ! If you paint a picture, what a long time it takes ! But the very minute that you think, you make a shape that leaves you to float away upon the air.

“ Where does it go ? ” you ask me.

Why, where do you think it can go, except just where you want to send it ? You have made it with your own thought-stuff, you have filled it with a piece of your very own life, and it cannot go anywhere of its own accord,—it travels where you wish.

If you throw a ball in front of you, you know that it cannot roll behind, so your thought can only go the way your will directs.

Of all you think you build a copy, which does not last for very long because it changes to the shape of the next thought that may come ; but while it lives it is as real a thing as any flower or tree.

A THING

When you think of some one, you make a form and fill it with your thought. It leaves you and goes straight to find him, and either helps or hurts. An unkind thought can hurt far more than any kick or blow, because it builds up other angry thoughts within the mind it reaches. It is such an ugly, ill-shaped thing ! If you could see it you would always stop before you lost your temper, and would try to make instead a thought of Love.

Love builds a thought that looks just like a flower with a rose-pink light inside ; how wonderful to think that you have power to build so beautiful a thing !

Every time that you are unselfish you send one of these lovely little flower-forms into some one else's mind, and it helps him to forget his own small wants, and to learn to be unselfish too.

“ But why can't I see my thought ? ”

I knew you would ask me that.

EVERY LITTLE THOUGHT

You cannot see it because it isn't made of the same kind of stuff as are all the earthly things. Your castles are built of bricks or sand, and your pictures are coloured with paint ; but your thoughts make forms that you cannot see because they are built of something that is even finer than the air.

You cannot see the air, can you ? Yet you know that it is all around you, and that you are always breathing it in and out of your body.

Hark, how the leaves rustle, and watch the trees sway to and fro ! You know that it is because the wind has risen, and you do not say that it is not there because you cannot see it. So although you may not see this even finer stuff of which your thoughts are made, yet it is everywhere.

Each thought that you think then, has a shape. It leaves you like a

A THING

bubble that you blow from a basin of soapsuds, and it is coloured too, according to the kind of thought that built it. Your kind thoughts shine like coloured lamps, but selfish ones are clouded with a dark and ugly fog.

So now you will never think again that just because you do not speak aloud an unkind thought that it can do no harm. You know now that it hurts as much as any word or deed, because it travels straight to harm the person who has angered you. It lives near him, tempting him to lose his temper, and to send out other angry thoughts like the one that came from you, and if he is unhappy or miserable that day, it may be just the strength of your unkind thought that makes him angry too.

So you see what a guard you ought to place upon your thoughts, as well as on your lips and hands.

EVERY LITTLE THOUGHT

But let us suppose that you sent an angry thought to some one whose temper was so sunny that he couldn't be angry if he tried.

"It wouldn't hurt him then," you say.

No, but yet it would hurt *you*.

For if you sent that thought to him, and he was so pure that it could not find its way into his heart, it would come back—the quickest and the shortest way—to the mind that sent it forth. It would come back to you. It would make you angry and cross again, and drive you to build more unkind thoughts and to speak more unkind words.

So, if you are wise, when a thought of anger comes you will not say to yourself that some one else has sent it, and that it cannot be your fault if you are cross: you will remember that perhaps it is your own thought that has journeyed home to you.

A THING

But the black thoughts are not the only ones that travel, there are white ones that are stronger still. Why are they stronger, do you say ?

Because LOVE builds them.

When you are older you will understand that no force on earth has building-power so great as Love.

If you are sorry for some one because he is lonely or ill, your thought flies straight to help him bear his trouble. Such a radiant and lovely thought ! If you could see it you would always stop a black one, and send him one of these instead.

You must be eager to help by the power of your thought, for you are old enough now, you know, to try.

Let us think how you can begin.

Perhaps you are at school, and some one is troubled because his sums will not come right. You can make him happier, although you cannot run across

EVERY LITTLE THOUGHT

the room to comfort him. Quickly make a thought of help and send it to him. It will reach him although you do not say a word, and presently you will see him work again with greater courage.

Perhaps Mother has a headache.

Say to yourself :—" I will send her a thought of Love to make her well."

You will find that Love will stroke the pain away.

Perhaps a hungry child is crying in the street.

Buy her some bread if you can ; but as you give it, wrap a thought of Love around it, and you will do more than just bring comfort to her body.

Oh, never think you are too small to help, while thoughts have so much power.

IV

THOUGHT-GIVING AND THOUGHT-GETTING

THIS morning there were angry words, and some one cried.

It grieved me, till I heard you say,—
“Never mind, I’ll kiss you better, just like Mother said.”

Then the sun shone in at my window because I knew that you understood, and I felt that you were turning away the angry thoughts to leave more room for tender ones to grow. . . .

Some day you will tell others all that you hear from me.

Not in just the same way perhaps, for words are only little boxes made to hold our thoughts.

Suppose some one gave you a box,

THOUGHT-GIVING

but when you peeped inside you found it empty ! What would you do ?

Why, throw the box away.

So, as you grow, you must learn to look inside each box of words to find the Thought within, and soon you will build boxes of your very own to hold your thoughts. But you won't be much use to the world if you keep all your thoughts for yourself. No one will like your boxes then or bother to peep inside !

You must give them away as fast as they come, for the more you give the more you get : great fresh strong thoughts that will help you to work, and to lend a hand to others.

Don't be afraid to give them away, for fear that no more will come. Suppose you went down to the sea with a pail, and tried to empty the water away !

That makes you laugh, for you know that it would never grow less ; but

AND THOUGHT-GETTING

there is just as much thought flowing through the world as there is water down by the shore, you can fill your pail as full as you like, there is always plenty left.

So fill it up full to the brim with thought, for that is the way to grow.

.

Never forget to give your thoughts to others, for if they are selfish they live round you like a shell. They cannot travel far away for you have fixed them on yourself, and you think the same ones, over and over again ; because the shell has grown so hard that the new thoughts cannot struggle through.

If you do not break the shell by giving thoughts to some one else, people will say " How selfish he is ! He thinks of no one but himself ! " And their love will pass you by, while yours lies sleeping in the shell.

THOUGHT-GIVING

But if you send your thoughts to others, they will leave room for kindly ones to thrive, and the shell will melt away like snow that feels the sun.

I think that every thought that is unselfish makes a little peep-hole through which your Real Self shines ; but if you only think of your own small doings, you will shut each peep-hole up, and your Lamp will fail to light the outside world.

What do I mean by “your Lamp,” do you ask ?

It is only a name for the REAL YOU, who shines within your house.

But it is not only selfishness that shuts those peepholes up : there is another and a sadder thing which has a greater power. It is the habit of Unkindness—of Finding Fault with others.

When you are selfish it is yourself you harm, for you shut so much of the Great and the Beautiful out of your life ; but when you think or speak of

AND THOUGHT-GETTING

other children's failings you are hurting others too besides yourself, for you are making it easier for them to fail again, you are pouring fresh strength into the faults you find, and thereby giving them a greater power to grow.

If you think that some one has acted in a way that seems quite wrong to you, I want you to cease to think of it at all.

Perhaps he may not yet have done the wrong, but the wish is growing in his mind. How sad then, if your thought that blames be just enough to push him into it !

Think what a wonderful thing you can do, if you send him a thought of help so strong that it reaches the evil wish that was there and turns it out of his mind.

So cease to chatter about the faults of all your friends at school, and look for something in them which you can praise instead. If you look deep enough inside,

THOUGHT-GIVING

there is always something waiting for your love.

I want you always to seek the good in every one, and you will be doing a beautiful thing,—you will be helping that good to grow. . . .

.
When you are big, perhaps you will think as Mother does, that the reason Good is stronger than Evil in the world, is because God always looks at it:—because for Him there is no Evil, for when it meets His Eyes it changes into Good. Evil is only something which is growing into Good, although we may not understand the way by which it climbs.

God sees no Evil for He is All-Good, and as we look within each thing to find the little seed of Good it hides, so do we grow a little nearer to His Great All-Goodness. . . .

.

AND THOUGHT-GETTING

Now when you are thinking over all that I have told you to-night, you will see that it is only when your thought is strong and clear that it can do your bidding, for then you fill it with so much of you. If you think idly, your thought can only make itself a feeble shape with no great power for either good or ill.

An idle thought drifts just like a little floating cloud; but a thought sent out with a will to serve flies like a pointed arrow.

So if you want to help, send one big thought instead of many helpless wishes, for wishes are useless in this world of ours.

“ I wish ! I wish !—— ”

Why, be a man, and say—“ I WILL ! ”

HOW TO BUILD A CASTLE

I HAVE often told you that you must try to send your thoughts of help to others, and to-night I want to show you why they have this claim on you.

How do you start your prayers each day ?

“ Our Father which art in Heaven.”

Yet He is not your Father only, for He is Father of all. How many other of His children are praying that prayer to-night !

You remember that I told you that we are part of God's own Life, that no living, breathing thing exists except in Him ?

Yes, you remember.

Now because we share this mighty Life, we all form part of one big family,

HOW TO BUILD A CASTLE

and wherever you can see the Life you know that you have found another brother.

Think how many brothers you must have ! You couldn't count them even if you tried.

Go for a walk, through a different town or village each day of your life if you like, and of every one you see you can say to yourself :—

“ HE IS MY BROTHER.”

And you will not be wrong.

The more that you can feel that each one is your brother, the greater is your joy in giving Love.

Of course I know that it is easy when you meet some one for whom you care. How your eyes shine as you say to yourself, so firmly and so proudly :—

**“ HE IS MY BROTHER, MY
BROTHER ! ”**

HOW TO BUILD

But it isn't always so easy to say when you meet him in a dirty, weary body : you have to look so deep inside to find him in a roadside tramp.

Yet you would not let a brother starve if you could find him bread,—you would not let a brother thirst if you could fetch him water from a stream ! I know that you would run for him with eager, willing feet.

But there are other things a brother needs besides just food and drink. He may be hungry for your help and thirsty for your love ; so just because it isn't bread and water that he lacks, you mustn't turn away and let him suffer want.

Give him, then, this inner food, a brother's love, and as you try a wonderful feeling of tenderness will grow within your heart.

It is such happiness to think that everyone you meet is just your brother.

A CASTLE

If someone you know is sad because he has no one at home to share his lessons or play, you can tell him all that you have learned to-night : that brothers and sisters wait everywhere to share his joys and sorrows, that the whole big world is full of both, all asking for his love.

.

I have said that you must try to help your brothers, because you then gain further strength to make your thoughts of love ; but there is an even greater reason which I will try to tell you now.

I would not have you drift through life, taking a pleasure when it comes and bearing pain as best you may, without some little signpost which will point the way to go. You mustn't think that you have come here just by chance, for every detail of this world is moulded by the thought of God before He puts it in His Plan.

HOW TO BUILD

Nothing is so small that it does not work for Him in just the way He means, and if at first it seems to spoil His Plan he sets it back a little until it fits in better.

“What is His Plan ? ” you ask me.

I can only tell you what I think : when you are big you may find another answer in your heart.

I think His Plan is Unity.

I think that He would have us part of His Perfection. I think that He wants to gather us so closely to Him that we can work as one, that all our separate thoughts can then be His Great Thinking, and all our separate loves His mighty Love.

So you see that anything we do which draws us closer to each other brings us a little nearer to this Unity. Then are we part of God's Great Plan, and working as He wills. But when we shut our greedy hands and will not help our

A CASTLE

brothers, we work against that Plan and break its Laws of Building.

It is as if we are building a Castle, and we have all been given a tiny bit to finish by ourselves. No one can help us with it—we have to build alone.

Now suppose that we shirk our work and leave it rough and unfinished ? We spoil the look of that corner of the building, however beautifully others build on either side of us.

What if we paint our piece of work in a colour that clashes with all the rest ? It may be a colour of which we are fond or one that is beautiful all alone, but it isn't in keeping here.

To build a perfect Castle each must do his share faithfully and well ; not chipping at his corner just in any way he wills, but working to make the Perfect Whole that God has planned. . . .

You see my meaning now, for I have watched you while I spoke.

HOW TO BUILD A CASTLE

You understand that though you try to reach God's Unity, you cannot rise there if your brother lags behind. However carefully you build your corner of the Castle, the lazy work of others spoils it all.

What must you do ?

Why, lend a hand and teach them how to build !

They are your Younger Brothers, and you must guide them in their work.

Point to the Castle that is growing, and show them that they must not spoil the Plan, and they will help a Building rise that reaches up to God.

VI

THE JOY OF WORK

Do you think it strange that I should speak to you about the Joy of Work ?

Have you begun to look on it as wearisome and dull, as something to be hurried over, so that you may go back to your games and play ?

It is time that we spoke of the Joy of Work if this be so.

Work is the Builder of Joy, because it is the Builder of qualities which alone can bring you Joy, and therein lies its value. It is not so much the work that you do that is of real importance, as the growth of Spirit that results from it, for whether you grow strong of purpose or feeble of will depends upon the energy with which you labour, and not upon the kind of work that you may do.

THE JOY OF WORK

So you must not judge a man by whether the world has called him great or not, for some of the noblest of the world's great men have lived and died unnoticed.

The world can never build a man, he has to build himself.

Sometimes I have heard you say, "I wish I had something to do," yet there is work for everyone, and if you are idle I am afraid that it is because you will not do the work that lies ready and waiting at your hand.

If the work of a life-time be hidden from you, there is always the task of to-day: it may not be just the work you would choose, but if it come to you unsought you may be sure that it is the very work of which you are in need.

There is no work, however humble, that is not worth the doing, and it is always wise to bear in mind that if it seem wearisome or dull it is you yourself

THE JOY OF WORK

that make it so, for everything has interest if you know the way to find it.

Every morning fix your mind on just one thing you mean to do, and at night look back over your day to see if you have carried out your purpose. If so, you may sleep with a happy heart, even if your work be nothing greater than the mending of a broken toy, or the watering of your garden. Make up your mind to do *something*, don't idle away your time with no true aim or clear idea of what you mean to do, for idleness is the outcome of a lazy mind and the stumbling block that lies in the way of the Building of your Perfect Self.

Work is neither great nor small, so long as it is needed. It has an inner spiritual side and leads you to the Infinite Spirit of Good, so that even if your task be just the digging of a ditch or the darning of a sock, your Spirit

THE JOY OF WORK

may be climbing to the Hill-tops as you work.

It is only through work that the Spirit of Good can shine through your outer shell, for work is the channel through which your Life-force pours ; but every time you say “ Impossible ” and lay aside your tools, you block the outlet of that force and check its power.

You must try to work for the love of the work and not for the praise of others. Don't look up to point out the amount that you have done ; but only pause to give a cheery word to the one who works beside you.

I want you always to be one of those who gives help rather than one who claims it : to be one of the bearers of burdens rather than one who needs another's help to bear.

If you work with a will and not by halves, doing the simplest task earnestly and faithfully, it will help you to sow

THE JOY OF WORK

a seed of strength in the heart of a weaker brother, and you will make your corner of the world a little sweeter and a little happier, more filled with the Infinite Spirit of Good.

There is no work that is unworthy of the God within if it be work for the common good, there is no task so mean that is not Spiritual and blessed if it helps the good to grow.

If you miss greatness in your task it is because you have failed to see that it is linked to the work of every other human being, and that every one is working at a little part that forms a fragment of the Work of all the World.

So love your work and do it joyfully, for it shares the majesty of all great tasks, and the grandeur of all humble, simple toil.

VII

BROTHERS ON THE PATH

I WANT to be so sure you understand that to help your Brothers is the Way to Happiness. Not only just the Brothers whom you love, but all the unknown ones as well, and even those who do you harm.

If you hurt a Brother whom you think you do not love, you are hurting, too, the one you love the most of all, for the happiness of every one depends on that of others.

You cannot travel on the Path which leads to God, unless you take your Brothers with you as you go.

There is no one who is not on this Path, but every one is walking at a different pace. Some are almost standing still, while more are running to and

BROTHERS ON THE PATH

fro chasing the butterflies and picking flowers, or chattering to each other under trees. Others are hurrying in little spurts, only to sit and rest between whiles ; but there are some who walk so steadily, with their eyes fixed on the Hill that rises at the Finish of the Path.

But none are journeying alone, for if you look closely at these people you will see that all of them are bound together with little silver ropes, so fine that they look like shining strands of frosted spiders' webs.

So what do you think must happen if one sits down to rest ?

Why, yes, of course—he drags the others back.

And suppose one walks a little faster than his Brothers ?

He pulls them with him as he goes.

But listen ! If he joins with several of his Brothers, and they walk in a little

BROTHERS

company together, there is a strength so wonderful in those little silver ropes ! I wish you could see them twisted into one great shining strand !

Do you understand this picture I have drawn for you ? I mean that if you are lazy and waste your time, you are like the Brothers who sit by the way to rest, and the silver ropes pull others back who are trying to push ahead. If you make up your mind to work one day but forget about it the next, I think you are like the butterfly-catchers who hurry and rest between.

But if every day you say to yourself :

“ I will help my Brothers, and pull with my silver ropes,” you are walking then so steadily towards the Hill.

Brothers are helping you too, you know,—Brothers in front of you on the Path : their silver ropes are pulling with ever increasing strength ; but if

ON THE PATH

you fail and lag behind, you make the burden heavier for their shoulders.

.

There are lights that glow like tiny fires upon this Path, so many that you cannot count them all, for each little traveller has a Lamp to light his way for him.

But isn't this strange? He doesn't carry it in his hands, for hands he needs to save his Brothers from a fall :—it is set within his forehead like a star. With every thought of love or friendly offering of help it lights his steps more clearly with its tender glow.

So you understand that if he rests or runs unequally and thereby checks the speed of all his Brothers, his star gives such a dim and feeble light that the Path seems dark and full of traps to catch unwary feet. But as he learns to walk with firmer purpose, it shines so brightly

BROTHERS

on the Path that he cannot miss his way, and others near him share its soft clear light, and gain a greater courage by its help.

The weary little Brothers, whose feet are saved from jagged stones and beds of angry nettles because they walk within the circle of his light, mark how each day the star within him grows.

It seems as if the light no longer shines from just his forehead, it seems as if he wears a shining golden coat which glistens through the outer earthly cover.

You have seen the sun shine through the clouds, growing at last so bright that you have had to turn your eyes away. So does the golden coat shine brightly through the veiling of the body, lending its light to younger stars that as yet have only learnt to glimmer in the dark. . . . If we could watch the Path with the Great Eyes of God, we

ON THE PATH

should see that it shows a winding course at first, lighted by these endless little stars that glitter like a stretch of diamond frost. But as it straightens to the Hill it alters to a Path of Shining Gold, for all those separate stars unite to form a Mighty Sun which wraps the Hill in Light. . . .

Each little star is lost in every other, yet finds itself within the Sun of God's Great Love. . . .

Do you understand my tale of stars, and the story I have weaved for you of Brothers on the Path ?

I think you do.

The Path is just your Life which leads you up to God.

The Real You is the star which gleams upon your forehead, the star which cannot shine through selfish wants and wishes, but glistens like a coat of gold if your ways are Ways of Love.

VIII

A SWORD OF SHINING POWER

JUST for to-night we will not speak of Brothers : we will not seek fresh ways to give them help :—just for to-night we will turn our thoughts to you. For you cannot show your brothers how to build a Castle unless you build within yourself as well, you cannot give them courage to tread the path of Service, unless they feel that you are strong to help.

“ But how can I build within myself ? ”
you ask.

You are building every minute of the day, with every thought or deed you add a little to your work ; but whether you build a Castle Beautiful or just an ugly barn depends upon the kind of Thought-Bricks that you make, and the Will with which you labour.

A SWORD OF SHINING POWER

You have often watched a builder, smoothing the mortar with his trowel as he puts each brick in place. You have a trowel too, with which to build your Castle Walls, and you cannot work without it.

Your trowel ?

Of course I mean your Will.

It is ever in your hand, but as you learn to use it faithfully and well, it changes from a builder's tool to a soldier's sword of shining power.

If you remember that it is a part of God's great Will, you understand the secret of its strength.

Each earthly thing can only keep its present form because God wills : He holds it just as long as He desires, and when He breaks it up He uses every piece to build another shape. Nothing is wasted in his work, because He builds so perfectly that He can find a use for all.

A SWORD OF

Each little speck of dust that blows across the road, or falls between two grinding rocks, is moulded into other forms. As He leaves each House it changes into dust, but that dust He takes to build another that is filled with greater beauty.

Because your Will is part of His, you too, can build with it; but only when it does the work that You —the Real You—set it. It must be your trained and willing servant, your Sword of Shining Power.

You would be angry if you rode a pony that would not go the way you wished, but took the bit between its teeth and galloped as it liked.

Yet if you cannot check your Will, and make it do exactly what you want, it is like that little pony that will not answer to the reins.

I want you always to do a thing because the Real You wishes it, I want

SHINING POWER

you to learn to use your Will to build your Castle Walls.

How can you train your Will to do your bidding ?

Let us find first the way that it must grow.

It must grow strong, not feeble : it must obey and not rebel : it must be firm with courage to work on in the dark. You must have faith in it, and know that it cannot fail ; because you know that it is a part of God's own Will, and the means by which the Real You climbs a little nearer up to God.

“ It must grow strong, not feeble.”

How can it grow in strength ?

If you do not use an arm or leg, it will waste away and lose all power to serve you.

In just the same way, if you do not use your Will, it will grow rusty and feeble, and fail you when you need it most. So the first thing you must do

A SWORD OF

is to learn to use your Will, to give it exercises just as you swing your clubs or drill to help your body to grow strong.

So here is an exercise that you can practise to-morrow.

Think of one thing at a time.

If you are putting on shoes, let "Shoes" be all your thought:—if you are doing your sums, don't think of your games after tea, but think of "Sums" and nothing else until you have finished them all.

To fix your mind on just one thing will help your Will to grow. So no matter how easy or simple your task, turn all your thought upon it, for when little vague thoughts drift through your mind you can't do the smallest thing well. You will never do anything great until you can do something small,—you will never conquer a kingdom until you can rule a thought.

SHINING POWER

All great things are small in beginning,
—the acorn grows into the oak, and the
greatest man is he who can rule his Will
in the tiniest things of life.

.

There is another way in which we said
your Will must grow.

“It must obey, and not rebel.”

So let us find an exercise to teach it
to obey.

Finish a thing when once you start.

Sometimes this is hard, I know.

Grown-up people think so too, unless
some one has helped them when they
were small, as I am trying to help you
now.

If you finish each thing as well as you
can, instead of leaving it half done
because a pleasure calls you, or because
it seems too hard, you build a brick of
perfect shape within your Castle Walls.

Make up your mind in the morning to

A SWORD OF

do some special thing. Perhaps your garden is full of weeds, or some one expects a letter.

Weed your garden until it is neat, and put your tools away, write your letter and finish it off, don't leave it until to-morrow, and you will do more than tidy your garden or even please a friend, you will start to fashion your Will to a Sword of Shining Power.

.

There is one more way, remember, by which your Will can grow.

“It must be firm with courage to work on in the dark.” That is the hardest of all, and yet just because it is so difficult, you will find that it is the royal road by which your Will grows strong.

It is easy enough to work bravely on when things go right for you, when you can see your Castle rising, and the sun is shining as you mould your bricks.

SHINING POWER

But it isn't so easy if dark days come, and you find that some of your bricks aren't quite the right shape, and they have to be thrown away. Sometimes you have to pull your wall down and begin to build again, and you feel so sad at the waste of time that you want to lay down your trowel, and leave your Castle Building.

Then is the time to be firm with courage, to work on in the dark !

Shape your bricks as well as you are able in those dusky days, lay them as truly straight as the lack of light will let you : and as you labour at your work, faithfully and bravely, the Hand of God will one day lift the purple curtains of the night, and gently place within your hands a Sword of Shining Power.

IX

THE LITTLE SECRET KEY

It grew late at our last little fireside talk, and I had to leave so much unsaid. Shall we pick up the threads to-night ?

Now that you know of the power that lies in your Sword of Will, you must be careful that you do not waste or fritter it away.

How can I waste my Will, do you ask ?

Every time that you fret because things do not happen just in the way that you would like, you are wasting so much Will.

Let us suppose that you are going out with some one, and you get impatient because you are ready first and you find that you must wait,—then do you fritter away the strength of your Sword of Shining Power.

THE SECRET KEY

Or perhaps a fly is buzzing on the window-pane, and watching idly you forget to work whole-heartedly : then do you split your thought in two, and halve its strength.

Think what a splendid chance you have to train your Will if some one talks in the room where you are learning a lesson !

Don't stop to grumble or to complain that you cannot do your work, but fix your mind firmly on your task, and when you can work as easily in a room full of people as you can when you are quite alone, you will have learnt one of the first lessons that must be mastered if you would grow to be a man who does great things.

You must not think that failure over little things like these can make no difference to your growth of Will, for it is the little happenings that count. Big things come seldom in our lives, and

THE SECRET KEY

when they do, whether we meet them bravely or shrink from facing them depends on whether we have trained our wills to grapple with the smallest details of a day.

It isn't the one great deed that shapes our will, but all the small forgotten acts that serve to test and strengthen it.

Think of the minutes of each hour ! We live them one by one, yet it is the manner of that living that gives the hour's result.

Think of the hours of every day ! Upon the action of each one depends whether the day be well or badly spent.

Think of a year of life ! It is built of all those days and hours and minutes which seemed so small and trivial as they slipped unnoticed by ; but if the year be great with deeds, it is because the minutes were spent grandly too.

To be worried or cross if things go wrong means that you scatter your

THE SECRET KEY

power, but when courage is yours in all you do and you have learnt "to work on in the dark," you will smile as you think of earlier days, and wonder why you had so little faith in the strength of your Shining Sword.

To have no faith in your power to win means that already you are half way on the road to failure.

If you say to yourself as you start your work

"This is so difficult."

you build a mountain in the way, up which you have to climb; but face it bravely, and it will shrink to a little grass-strewn hill, and you will laugh to think you feared it.

Even if your task seems quite beyond your strength, what does it matter? You have been given it as a means whereby your Will may grow, and whether you succeed or fail is not the

THE SECRET KEY

point that really matters, as you will understand when you are big.

Work bravely on, and do the best you can.

Don't be afraid to begin over and over again ; but every time you start afresh remember—for this is the little secret key—to keep the thought so firmly in your mind that success is bound to crown your work.

Say to yourself,

“ I can do it if I will.”

Put all idea of failure right away from you, for failure comes to those who fear it. Perhaps ninety-nine times you may start and fail, but on the morning of the hundredth time you will find a new way to do your work, fresh thought will come to you and will make your road so plain, that you will wonder that you could have been so blind those ninety-nine times before.

THE SECRET KEY

If your Will be strong enough you are bound to win in the end. You can make your own future as you will, and build your own life. Nothing can stop your progress, only your own small self—nothing can bar success from you, except your thought of failure.

How wonderful to think such power is lying in your hands! Yet I would rather that you did not use it to build entirely for yourself, I would like to see you choose the better way, to watch you build what happiness you can for others rather than yourself. Your Sword of Shining Power will thereby grow as strong as if you willed for selfish gain, and you will find a strange thing happens: for as you build a House of Happiness for those you love, a little Secret Place of Joy will rise unnoticed close at hand for you.

But if you strive for pleasures for yourself with not a thought of giving

THE SECRET KEY

them to others, they will not build you Happiness or Joy ; they will shut you in four prison walls, so thick that the Light of Brothers cannot enter in.

Like a miser you may grasp success, but though all power and riches may be counted yours, yet if you have no Brother with whom they can be shared you will grow sick and weary of your treasures, and will beat your wings against your sunless prison walls.

It is easier to build a prison than to find a way to leave it ; it is not until your Will has learnt to fashion a little key called "Loving Help," that you can unlock your prison door, and pass into the Sun of Comradeship and the Greater Joy of Giving.

YOUR SPIRIT-SELF AND LOWER SELF

Do you understand, I wonder, that you have two separate selves within you ? One Self that urges you to do all that you can to bring happiness and joy to others, and another that seems petty and small in its desires, and wrapped up in its own pleasures and pains ?

The self that thinks nobly and purely is your Higher Self, who is a part of God's own Power and Life : the Real You who has been growing throughout long ages of time, and who will not rest until you reach to Perfect Beauty.

The other Self is the Self of the Body, a Lower Self that is made up of all your beliefs and ideas which are not really true or lasting, because they are not

YOUR SPIRIT-SELF

your own that you have built, but those that have been given to you by the thoughts of other people.

The Real You is the Spirit-Self that lies deep within, so deep that you might almost wonder sometimes if it is really there, and yet it is the Self that you must learn to trust and follow, for it is the very Spirit of God.

It is a Self that can do no wrong, for evil cannot live where Spirit dwells. It is a Self that is All Love, All Tenderness, All Joy and Peace, for it is God.

Isn't it wonderful to think that your body is really and truly the "Temple of God?" It makes you understand how purely you should live, so that it may be a "Temple" worthy of the name.

I know that when you enter a church you try to leave all your lower thoughts outside, because you feel that you are coming close to the Presence of God ;

AND LOWER SELF

but this little body of yours is a greater Temple than any church of brick or stone, and you must keep it worthy of the God who dwells within.

You must remember that the Spirit-Self of Infinite Power and Purity and Strength is not possessed by one and lacking in another, it is the Hidden Treasure of all.

Sometimes we cannot find it in another because his thoughts are turned towards the wants and wishes of his Lower Self, and he has forgotten all about his Spirit-Self that is so strong in Power. Often you will find that he grows tired and ill, because he is depending upon his Lower Self : he is like a man who tries to push a motor up a hill because he does not understand the way to drive.

Anger and Hate and Selfishness are only a part of the Lower Self, and are quite separate from the Real True You which is built of the Infinite Spirit of Good.

YOUR SPIRIT-SELF

But every time that you try to follow the guiding of the Spirit-Self who teaches Peace and Love you begin to understand that what you have always called *yourself* is not really a part of you at all, and that your everyday feelings and wishes have nothing to do with that wonderful Real You which I speak of as Your "Spirit-Self."

So when you are sick and ill, or miserable and unhappy, I want you to remember that it is only the Lower Self which is calling so loudly : I want you to turn all your thoughts towards your Spirit-Self, and it will lift you out of your sickness and smooth away your troubles, because only good can live where the Life of God is resting.

Every thought of Love or Tenderness is the voice of your Spirit-Self speaking, every feeling of irritation is an effort of your Lower Self to limit and stop you in your growing, so you must

AND LOWER SELF

firmly and strongly make up your mind to shut your ears to the calling of your Lower Self, and to follow only the voice of the Spirit that speaks within. Many a time you may fail, but pick yourself up cheerily after every stumble, for no one has ever managed to climb without some slipping back. If the day be far from smooth and you begin to get cross or angry, say to yourself—

“ I am the Spirit of Love,
Love is my Spirit-Self,”

and you will find that your Lower Self is quieted, and that your Spirit-Self will guide you safely through your day.

You must remember too, that while your Lower Self lies sleeping, your Spirit-Self is working still. It cannot sleep because it shares the Life of God.

How can God sleep ? So long ago He made the sky, the land, the sea, and His Eyes have always watched them since.

YOUR SPIRIT-SELF

If He slept, all Life would slumber too until He stirred again.

As our Spirit-Self is part of Him, it can no more lie sleeping in our bodies than can our life blood cease to flow until the heart stops beating. Open your eyes, and see God's Spirit moving everywhere, God's Life that needs no sleep nor rest.

.

I want you to be very careful of your thoughts before you go to sleep, because I think that your Spirit-Self will often act upon the last thought in your mind.

Do you understand exactly what I mean ?

I mean that if you fall asleep with some wish in your mind, you tend to work for it the whole night through, and because the Real You is a Fragment of God's Spirit, you have a greater

AND LOWER SELF

power to gain what you desire while your Lower Self lies sleeping and cannot hamper you.

So think your purest thoughts as you lay your head upon your pillow : try to forget your earthly wants and wishes, and make up your mind to bring what happiness you can to some one who is needing both your comfort and your love.

You can reach your brothers while your body sleeps, because to think of them will carry you to where they are at once. Thought has such power within the World of Spirit that it can carry you to where you will.

Think of the happiness that you can bring to some one who is miserable to-night.

Say to yourself as you close your eyes,

“I will help him with my love,”

and as your body sleeps, the Real You

SPIRIT-SELF AND LOWER SELF

will spread two Wings of God and carry you to your brother through the night.

You need not fear that you will lose your way, for there are no dark paths where Love is calling.

“Little sad brother,” you will say, “you cannot be lonely while God is resting in your heart and mine.

“Little sad brother, dry your eyes, and take the Love I bring.”

XI

THE BUILDING OF STRENGTH AND BEAUTY

You will find a verse in the Bible which tells you that “ As a man thinketh, so is he ” ; and to-night I want to show you as plainly as I can that you do really build yourself by the power of your mind, and that even your health and strength and very looks depend upon the way you think.

It is your mind that really shapes your body, for although when you are young an ugly, unkind thought may seem to leave no trace behind, yet if it give birth to others until you are always building thoughts that are unworthy of your Spirit-Self, in time they will write their story so plainly on your face that people will not have to

THE BUILDING OF

wait to hear you speak to know that you have no gift of Happiness to bring them.

But if your thoughts are loving and unselfish, little Shining Messengers from the Real You within, when you are older Beauty will speak so strongly from the tender lines of your face, that people cannot fail to feel the Joy with which you bless them.

It is natural for you to turn from all that is ugly and decayed, because planted within you is the Spirit's Love of Beauty and Perfection.

If a flower be beautiful, it is because it grows in the way that God has planned, and the Life within is shaping it until it reaches to its full-time blossoming. That is the way that you are meant to grow, and if your body be weak or ill, it is because it is not working as the Life within would have it.

You know that in a lake you can see the surrounding hills and trees mirrored

STRENGTH AND BEAUTY

in its quiet depths, and that if a breeze ruffles the surface of the water it blurs the beauty of the pictured hills.

In just the same way, your body which seems so real a thing is only the reflection of your mind, and when it is disturbed or ill it is because it is not reflecting a perfect picture of the mind, it is as if a little breeze had ruffled the quiet lake and “blurred the beauty of the pictured hills.”

Whether you are weak and ill, or healthy and strong, depends upon the kind of thoughts that you allow to rest within your mind. “Thought grows by Thought.” Remember that, and you will understand that the way to be healthy and brave is to think of Health and Bravery, and the way to be weak and ill is to fear that weakness and ill-health may come to you.

So learn to put every fear of pain or illness right away from you.

THE BUILDING OF

If you are weary with the heat and disinclined to work, don't think to yourself, "How hot it is!—I cannot do my work"; for such a thought will make your body all the weaker.

If you are tired with a long day's work, turn the thought of weariness out of your mind and say to yourself:

"My Body is made of Strength,
For My Spirit is Strong,"

and you will be filled with a wave of strength, and weariness will leave you.

Perhaps you are afraid to enter a room that is dark, or sometimes perhaps you wake in the night trembling at shadows that lie across the room.

"O never strike sail to a fear," as a great man has written. Remember that "as a man thinketh, so is he," and that if you think bravely your body will answer and become built upon such lines of Courage that however

STRENGTH AND BEAUTY

dark the night or deep the shadows,
no Fear or Cowardice can rest within
you.

But your body will never be able to
reflect your thought until you have learnt
to tidy your mind.

People forget, or perhaps they have
not learnt, that if they have untidy
minds they will have untidy or un-
healthy bodies too.

So that is why I say that you must
learn to tidy your mind. Give up
trying to think of five or six things at
once, for such thinking is but vague
and valueless and when reflected in
your body will make you act in a
hasty, undecided way.

Begin in little ways to tidy your mind
and body too. Is your bookshelf as
neat as the first day that it was given
to you, when you arranged your stock
of books so proudly and so carefully?

Are your shoes put neatly away, and

STRENGTH AND BEAUTY

can you shut your cupboard door, or is it full of rubbish ?

Do such things seem so small to you ? They are not so. They are reflections of your mind, and nothing can be small or mean which teaches your Spirit ways in which to grow.

When you have learnt to keep your books and your cupboard tidy and neat, you will find that you are keeping your thoughts in order too ; not letting them stray from one thing to another in any way they will, but making the thought work with the deed until the task be done.

So tidy your mind, and “ shut your cupboard door.” Turn out the thoughts that have crept from their proper places, to make plenty of room for better ones to grow, and you will find your mind reflected in a body that is radiant with Strength and Beauty too.

XII

COURAGE

I HAVE spoken to you sometimes of the need you have for Courage, for all Success and Happiness depend on its possession.

Yet you must not think that I am only speaking of the Courage that can face a sudden danger, I would have you learn such strength of mind that fear can gain no mastery in the smallest happenings of your life. There is cowardice of thought as well as action, and if you fail when some great danger presses it is because you could not meet in thought the little daily tests.

Whether Courage walks with you to help you through your day, or Fear is your companion who will ever drag you back, depends entirely on yourself, on

COURAGE

whether you have learnt to be the master of your mind so that it is always obedient to your will.

Unless you are the master and can understand that it is Fear alone that checks and cramps your powers, you will do little in this earthly world or in the world of Thought.

See that your store of Courage grows bigger every day: there is no deed in life so small that you may not use it as a means whereby that store may grow.

Put your whole mind into your work, be determined that you cannot fail, and you will find that you have set your feet upon a path that leads you to success; but if you start half-heartedly, allowing a thought to cross your mind that your strength may be unequal to your task, you sow a seed of Fear which perhaps will grow into a weed to choke the Flower of Courage that was planted close at hand.

COURAGE

You must remember that all Success or Failure depends far more upon your thoughts of Courage or of Fear than upon any outside help that may be given you, for I have told you of the way in which your thought goes out to mingle with the great Thought-Currents of the World.

If you work bravely and with courage, your thought calls to all the thoughts of Courage that others are building into their work, and not only does it help to strengthen them, but it gains from them an added power to carry back to you. But if you work with a fear that you may fail, that fear travels as surely as did the thought of Courage until it meets the thoughts of others who are fearing too, and they crowd upon you as you work, bringing failure in their train.

You cannot gain Courage until you learn to trust yourself and to depend

COURAGE

upon your own unaided work. Make your own decisions, and try to find a way to do things by yourself instead of always seeking help from other people. Such knowledge that you learn you will not easily forget, and also you will gain confidence in your powers, which will be of greater value than you think in later life.

Trust in your own small self and power to do, and you will find that you begin to gain the trust of others, which is a very sweet and precious treasure to possess.

Make up your mind that nothing can shake your Courage, determine that Fear shall have no power to touch you, for your thought can make or mar your work. Your Courage or Fear can win or lose you all material things as well as gifts of Spirit.

It is not lack of power that makes you fail, but lack of knowledge of the way to use the power.

COURAGE

Why should you fear ?

You are a part of One Great Life, a Sharer of the Strength that binds the worlds together, and when you have made this thought your own and built it into yourself, there is no limit to the power you may possess.

Courage uplifts and bears you over the stones that lie on your pathway up to God. It is only fear that makes you stumble and dread the roughness of the Climb.

Don't be content to do only those things which lie easily within your present power. Strike boldly out and test your strength.

You can never learn to swim if you keep one foot on the ground, you can never learn to do big things unless you risk a little.

Try to grow a little every day, facing bravely all that comes, and if your troubles press on you, don't give Fear

COURAGE

the power to make them heavier. Call on your Courage and face them as they come.

Sometimes we are afraid because we do not meet our troubles singly, but see them in thought all massed together in one great mountainous load, yet we must remember that we only have to face them one by one.

The Courage that you need is only just enough to do the next thing well, so turn the whole of your thought to the work of mastering it, and do not think of all those other tasks which lie beyond.

All that you are asked to do is just one thing at a time. This may sound easy until you try, and then I think you will understand what a very big lesson it is that has been given you to learn.

If while you do your present task, your thoughts are turned in doubt upon the next succeeding one, I am afraid

COURAGE

that you will find that you may fail in both; for the Secret of Success lies in the power to turn the whole of your mind upon the doing of one thing at a time, however small or trivial it may be, and then to pass cheerfully and willingly to the next duty with no lingering or backward thought.

Your Thought of Courage is a magnet that can draw success to you, for it attracts others of its kind, until you are filled with a wonderful feeling of strength, and you find that you are drawn more and more into the company of those who are growing strong too, for that saying which you know so well, "Birds of a feather flock together," is based on a truth more deep than you may understand.

While you are growing in Courage, perhaps you may meet some one who is nervous or afraid.

What must you do ?

COURAGE

Send him all your thoughts of Courage and wrap [him in your Strength, show him how sad a thing it is to be afraid, because it robs him of his power to win.

Don't be content until you have given him all your loving help and tender sympathy, for if you do so you will know that you are growing in the right way. You will know that you are not building selfishly for yourself, because you want greater power or success ; but only because Love shines so strongly that you cannot be happy unless you feel that you are building happiness and strength for others too.



XIII

MESSENGERS OF LOVE

I THINK that at night when you work within your shining Spirit-body, only those whose earthly bodies are asleep can see you as you pass, except just now and then it happens that the Spirit Eyes of some one who is still awake look, for a moment, through the earthly coverings.

Then perhaps he says that an angel or a messenger from God appeared to him, because he saw the shining of the Spirit, and failed to understand that while the earthly bodies lie asleep we all are walking in our angel clothes.

He is wiser than he knows, for we are all angels, only some of us are lesser ones than others: we are all messengers from God, although we may forget the message He has trusted us to carry.

MESSENGERS

“ The message ? ” do you ask.

I think the message He would have us bring is LOVE, and every time we bear it to our brothers, we are His messengers of Shining Light. It is only the blindness of our earth-filled eyes that makes us fail to see the Angel in each brother whom we meet.

When those we love have laid aside their earthly coats and are what the world calls “ dead,” we speak of them as Angels, yet they were Angels just as much before. It was only that we could not see the shining of their Spirits, because the earthly coats lay in between.

I want you always to remember to look inside the coat until you see the Angel's Light within, for an angel is only some one who is learning to bring God's message to his brothers.

Each Angel in his turn is helped by others who are nearer God, and they as

OF LOVE

well are guided by a Greater One above. There is no one, however frail or full of sin, no one however strong and pure of heart, who has no Guardian Angel to shelter him with wings of love.

I think that if two people love, it is because their Angels have seen and loved each other first, and a picture of their love reflects within the hearts of the children whom they guard. So if you quarrel with the one you love, I fear you raise a veil of mist between two Angels' faces.

Mist, grey mist of quarrelling and hate !
Blow it away with a tender breath of
Love and let the Sunlight of their Joy
be yours.

.

Just as an Angel guards each one of us with loving watchful care, so I think that a little spirit watches over every flower and tree, who grieves when the

MESSENGERS

flower is trampled on, or when the tree is rooted from the ground.

I fancy that the little guardian paints each petal of a rose ; perhaps she lays her colour in the heart at eventide, and leaves it through the summer night, until the tender dew washes the rosy stain throughout the opened petals.

I love to think that every little peep of green is watched by guardian spirits.

What though you cannot see them ? They are there !

Little Spirit-Children who teach the acorn how to shoot, and guide the tender rootlets till they bore strong tunnels through the earth, tiny sprites who whisper to the growing trees when budding-time draws near, pixies of the grassy glades, elves of the mountain forests and fays of dancing streams and silver brooks.

Perhaps you may be told that spirit-elves can have no real existence, that

OF LOVE

tales 'of fairies are not really true ;
but if you like to think that every
little growing flower is cared for by some
tender sprite, you may remember that
I love to think so too.

XIV

BY LOVE WE SERVE

TO-NIGHT I want to speak of something that may seem at first so simple and easy to understand that perhaps you will wonder why I have chosen it for one of our evening talks.

But when I have finished I think that you will understand.

I want to speak of Friendship and the Service it demands, and to show you that it is so precious and so real a thing that you must learn to treasure it as a tender flower that grows from God's own seed.

By Friendship I do not mean the ordinary friendliness you feel for boys and girls with whom you work or play, I mean a rarer, deeper feeling of the heart.

BY LOVE WE SERVE

If when you meet a friend, something inside you seems to rise and sing, just as the lark upon the common yesterday rose at our feet and trilled its way to God, that is a call from some one for your love.

Have you wondered sometimes, why it is that you love one person, and yet pass another by ?

I think it is because you have known him in an earlier life than this ; perhaps you may have helped him through some trouble in days of long ago, and though your memory is clouded yet the Love is clear.

For Love is a flower that cannot die, because God plants it in your heart : each life it blossoms as a rose-tree buds when Spring awakes it from the winter sleep.

You pass so many lives upon this dear, sweet earth—I have told you often that the Real You cannot die—

BY LOVE

you would not like to think you only came here once?

All your real true friends are people whom you loved and helped in many lives now past, and every happiness that they may bring you grows from Joy you gave them long ago.

If you should meet an enemy who does you harm, remember that you must have hurt him in the past, and that it is your own unkindness coming back to you. But ever be ready to forgive, and you will make of him a friend instead, for he cannot frown for long within the sunshine of your love, and I think you understand that if you win him as your friend, he will love you in another life as well as this.

It is easy enough to find a friend, but it is no simple thing to keep him afterwards, unless you bind him to you with silken threads of Love and willing Service.

WE SERVE

You will find, I think, that you cannot choose your friends, the real, true ones, I mean. They are drawn to you as surely as steel is drawn towards a magnet, and just as all that is not really steel lies cold and lifeless to the magnet's call, so all who cannot answer to the Call of Service are not really of the Company of Friends.

"Service" is the Password that every one must learn to meet the sentry's challenge: Service alone calls forth the quiet welcoming "Pass, Friend" that greets another member of the army which he guards.

When I speak of Service, I do not mean that you must watch for some great deed that needs performing, or you may find that while you watched you failed to do the many little acts of Service which united are of greater worth.

Do the duty that is waiting close at

BY LOVE

hand, with not a thought of whether it be great or small : put your whole mind into it that you may do it just as well as you are able, so that when some day a larger call for Service comes which needs all your Will and Courage to perform, you can rise and face it like a man, because you learnt to give the best you had in the smaller Service of the past.

Make yourself fit to serve, and God will send the work for you to do : if it seem hard you must be proud to think that He has found that you have power to do so difficult a task, and if you fail, remember that such failure is an opportunity for you to grow in courage.

There is no shame in failure if you have done your best, the shame lies only in the cowardice that will not rise to fight a second time.

Never grumble because you think that you have no chance to “carve your

WE SERVE

way"; perhaps the work that God would have you do is to smooth a way for others. Perhaps He wants you to make the road a little softer for their feet, and not that you should try to struggle up to mountain peaks. Perhaps He means you to bring sunshine into empty, lonely lives, and not that you should claim your share of Joy: perhaps He would have you hide the faults of others, tenderly and gently with your love, and not that all your thinking should be turned upon yourself.

Oh, little builder of a Castle, I would have you learn that you are here to serve others, not to be served: that you are here to give, not to take: that you are here to make beautiful the lives of others, not to build a world of Beauty for yourself.

I want you to make every day a little life of Service. Don't look back upon the good or bad deeds of the past, don't

BY LOVE

let the memory of them weigh upon your mind ; but start each day with a clean slate, and see that you write on it some deed of Loving Service before the sun has set, for if you spend each day in the service of your brothers, you will find that you have spent your life in serving God.

Such Service will write its Beauty on your heart, so that all who are lonely and weary, helpless and loveless, will be drawn to you for comfort, and you will not have to look for ways to serve, for ways will crowd upon you as your love of Service grows.

Every morning when you rise, say to yourself quietly and reverently,

“ BY LOVE WE SERVE.”

and every night look back to see if Love and Service walked with you that day.

“ BY LOVE WE SERVE.”

WE SERVE

Think of the thousand little unremembered ways to serve that pass unnoticed in your life ! Each is a seed from which the Flower of Friendship might have grown, each is a Pearl that you might have strung upon your thread of Life.

Treasure each Pearl and every tiny Seed,—

“By Love we serve.” There is no other way.

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